

 NRHC
2026

ANNUAL REPORT

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Business Meeting Agenda



NRHC Business Meeting @ Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference
New Haven, CT
Sunday, March 29, 2026

Establish Quorum

Welcome and Call to Order	Jess McCort
Approval of Fall 2025 Business Meeting Minutes	Kathryn MacDonald

Reports of Officers and Board Members

President's Report	Jess McCort
Executive Treasurer's Report	Michael Tasto
Executive Secretary's Report	Kathryn MacDonald
Web Coordinator Report	Tanya Radford
2026 Conference Report	Andrew Martino
Faculty Representatives' Report	AnnMarie DelliPizzi and Sarah Roe
Student Representatives' Report	Rhheaa Mehta, Fatimat Abdallah Banda, Rory Stansfield
Report on NRHC Journal – <i>Illuminate</i>	Diana Polley

New Business

Spring 2026 NRHC Board Elections	Jessica McCort
Future Conference Sites	Michael Tasto and Chris Brittain
Theme & Planning for #NRHC2027	Zachary Aidala
Reminder on Registration Pricing	Jess McCort and Mike Tasto
NRHC Member Involvement	Jess McCort, Andrew Martino, Zachary Aidala
Other Business	Open Forum

Adjournment

President's Report

March 2026

Dear Members of the Northeast Regional Honors Council,

Welcome! We gather this year in New Haven, CT for our annual Conference. In 2026, we will have our largest number of conference registrants in years, topping out close to 500 participants. We are so proud to host the students from across our region as they present their scholarly research, creative work, and co-curricular honors endeavors. As always, we also have planned robust student-centered events that encourage students to network with peers (and hopefully have some fun along the way). We thank you for your continued feedback and support as we work to provide a seamless and memorable conference experience.

Welcome to New Haven and the Haven of Honors.

Best Regards,

Jessica McCort, Ph.D.

President and 2026 Conference Co-Chair

Fall 2025 Business Meeting Minutes



NRHC Business Meeting
National Collegiate Honors Council Conference
San Diego, CA
Saturday, November 8, 2025 – 5:00 PM

Establish Quorum

Welcome and Call to Order

Jessica McCort

- The meeting began at 5:03 p.m.
- All of the board members present introduced themselves: Jessica McCort, Zachary Aidala, Kat MacDonald, Tanya Radford, Mike Tasto, Diana Polley, AnnMarie DelliPizzi, and former board member Amanda Olachea

Approval of Spring 2025 Business Meeting Minutes

Kathryn MacDonald

- Tanya Radford motioned; Susan Dinan seconded
- No discussion
- All present approved the minutes; no opposition, no abstentions

Officer and Board Member Reports

President's Report

Jessica McCort

- Jessica reported on the success of the Harrisburg 2025 Conference (Civic Engagements at the Crossroads)
- Number of attendance
- Thanks to the board for running a successful conference
- Our conference feedback survey garnered 67 responses, and it was very comprehensive feedback
 - The conference experience overall and communication rated at 4s & 5s on a scale with highest satisfaction on 5
 - Allison McCartney said the co-chairs of Harrisburg deserve a round of applause – it was not a traditional location. Her students didn't know what to expect of Harrisburg but they loved it and they were really pleased with it. The pricing was affordable. They learned so much.
 - Coauthors vs. Co-presenters - we took this into account as we plan for 2026 and proposers will be able to select coauthors vs. copresenters (coauthors will be listed but not attend the event; copresenters will be listed and we will plan to see them at the conference)
 - We also are going to add a Professional category for more networking, idea sharing, etc. since the Idea Exchange was not well attended

- We opted to change the term from Disciplinary Strand to Disciplinary Track
- TORCH has been established – seeking passionate volunteers

Tanya Radford

- Tanya mentioned that she is in the third year of her term, and she didn't have experience in web design and was a bit intimidated, but it has not been a heavy lift. She has found it a learning experience and encouraged folks to run for the position if they are interested in the spring.
- In addition to managing the website, Tanya works with our vendor, YesEvents, to set up the CFP website and conference registration website.
- The conference schedule on the website was a way to cut costs and we'd like to keep doing that way.
- You can reference the business meeting materials to look at the datapoints that we track with the help of YesEvents.
- Our CFP is currently open and the current deadline is November 17 and we have 34 completed proposals and 12 in progress. We would, ideally, like to see more proposals in progress earlier. We generally get a huge rush of them at the end, and then we usually extend. In practice, we need to have a certain number of proposals to break even and stay fiscally healthy.

Executive Treasurer's Report

Mike Tasto

- We are doing well financially.
- Last year, we put \$100K in a CD with a 4.5% return and that money will be coming back to us.
- At the Harrisburg meeting, we talked about increasing costs to meet the rising cost. Two prongs – increase in membership dues and tiered increase in conference registration costs.
- The dues increase will be discussed later as a voting matter.
- The conference registration will be a tiered increase - \$25 per year increase for next three years.
- Springfield, MA and Baltimore, MD
- Negotiating contracts – Mike needs to give Kat the numbers again
- \$179 - \$199 per room – we negotiate to keep room costs low for members.
- Scouting locations is also something we think about
- 58 institutions to 63 (Tanya)
 - Middle States initiative
 - Jess mentioned that you can help us grow our region too
- Hotel billing is always difficult - Mike reviews the bill, and hotels often try to charge us more – \$15, 600 was returned from Harrisburg to us. We review the BEO (Banquet Events Order) page by page to be sure that we are not overpaying or being taken advantage of.
- In New Haven, we had to choose between dessert and salad for lunch and it would cost \$3000 to add it, so we will be without dessert at lunch (sorry!)
- We will continue to bring our own AV to conference and save on hotel AV costs
- Allison McCartney motioned to ; Patrick – all present approved the Treasurer's Report

Zachary Aidala & Amanda Oleachea, on behalf of the Student Representatives

- Amanda Oleachea presented the Student Rep Report on behalf of Rheeaa Mehta, Rory Stansfield, and Fatimat ??
- Amanda reviewed their letter (in the business meeting materials). They provide student events each day of conference:
 - Thursday - teamwork and trivia night
 - Friday - karaoke night
 - Saturday - gala night

- Zak mentioned that directors encourage their students to volunteer for the Student Activities Committee to help the Student Reps plan and organize the conference. Follow us on Instagram (@nrhchonors)

Faculty Representatives Report

AnnMarie DelliPizzi & Sarah Roe

- AnnMarie delivered the report on behalf of the faculty reps.
- One of the roles Faculty Reps play is to manage the SEA Scholarship (to offset the cost of the conference for diverse students—free conference registration and \$50 cash to each student). We gave out 13 scholarships in 2025.
- The deadline will be in late January.
- We also have a scholarship for Partners in the Park for Students that is in the form of reimbursement after they participate and provide a reflection.
- The professional development at the 2026 conference will be a replacement of Consultants' Corner and we want you to submit your proposals to us as posters, roundtables, and idea exchanges. These proposal will go into the CFP as well.

Report on NRHC Journal – *Illuminate*

Diana Polley

- Diana stepped into the role of Publications Officer half way through the production cycle and thanked Kat for her work getting the journal to its current form.
- 27 - 14 academic; 13 creative
- The 2025 Edition (Volume 7) is LIVE!
- Lower overall acceptance rate as a way to encourage more rigor in the journal.
- We will continue to send reminders as a call for
- Please send feedback or suggestions to Diana at illuminatenrhc@gmail.com

New Business

Proposals for the Membership to Vote Upon

Jessica McCort

- Increasing the Institutional Dues from \$200 per year to \$300 per year
 - This will be a revenue increase of \$10,000 per year approximately according to Mike.
 - Call for discussion - no discussion!
- Constitutional Amendment Proposals
 - Article IV: Officers and Their Duties
 - We faced the loss of a board member in the executive cycle. This has left a hole in our executive cycle. The proposal essentially outlines revisions to allow the Executive Board to appoint individuals to take on these roles so we don't have to face a gap in the cycle.
 - The current Constitution has certain limitations that prevent the board from ensuring that leadership roles remain uninterrupted.
 - Current executive officers echoed that these gaps would interrupt things
 - Kat asked the membership to trust us
 - Susan Dinan says this happened in 2005 when she was in the executive leadership cycle, and she was asked to chair a conference, so she feels this is a good idea!
 - We also want to propose that Student Representatives who choose to run have also attended at least one regional conference.
 - Tanya said that if you bring students to the conference, have them pay attention to the ones that you think who could be great student leaders.

- Patrick asked if there were rules about students from the same institution being Student Reps. Zak responded that hasn't been an issue.
- Proposal to add TORCH as Subcommittee to the Constitution

NRHC Membership Involvement

Jessica McCort

- Link in meeting materials
- Local Hosts - Quinnipiac

Spring 2026 NRHC Board Positions and Elections

Jessica McCort

- VP
- Faculty Rep
- Student Representatives (3 positions)
- Executive Secretary (1 position)
- Web Coordinator (1 position)
 - Jess advocated for running and said that it is work, but it is very meaningful. They are stipend positions.
 - Tanya mentioned the level of support offered to new board members.

Theme and Planning for NRHC 2025

Andrew Martino, Jessica McCort

- The theme is on our website but proposals don't need to be tied to the theme.
- Information on the speakers is in the business materials.
- Due to limits on time

Other Business

Open Forum

- NCHC Board of Directors Leadership: Dan Roberts, Eddie Weller, and Christopher Syrnyk joined us at 5:11 PM. Dan (Conference Chair) expressed his hope that we have enjoyed the conference and to please complete the conference survey; Next year, the conference will be in New Orleans, LA and Christopher will be the Conference Chair and he looks forward to the conference and wants conference feedback, welcoming us to reach out to him directly. Eddie Weller is the Immediate Past President of NCHC and thanked us for coming to NCHC 2025 and expressed we are the heart of honors education and that we change lives.
- Place as Text: Melissa Kaplan spoke about PAT pedagogical opportunities (there is one in Philadelphia, PA upcoming). Bernice Braid also was at our meeting, and she encouraged everyone to come as a Philadelphia native. If the summer is busy for you to travel, there is also a virtual institute. Just as was done in San Diego, there will also be a series of institutes as pre-conference programs for NCHC 2026 in New Orleans. Opportunities include how to learn more about City as Text and how to integrate into their programs (intro class); for more who want to go deeper into pedagogy and study abroad, there will be a Master Class. These courses come together at the end. Diana Polley, on NRHC Board, is also a member of the committee and a resource to NRHC.
- We are very thankful for your support.

Adjournment

- Allison McCartney motioned, Diana Polley seconded and all voted in favor of adjournment.
- The meeting adjourned at 5:51 PM.

Executive Treasurer's Report

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	New Haven 2026								
2	Faculty Social - Thursday Evening (26th March) 8:30 -10pm								
3	*Must Order Hors D Oeuvres in increments of 50								
4		Item	Price per 50 pt	Number of Or	Participa	Estimated Cost			
5		Classic Italian Bruschetta	30	0		0			
6		Spanakopita	162.5	0		0			
7		Bacon Wrapped Scallops	250	0		0			
8		Sriracha Chicken Dumplings	187.5	0		0			
9		Mini Crabcakes	250	0		0			
10		Ice Water	\$0.00	0	Gallons	0			
11		TOTAL COST		0	0	\$0.00	Note: The cost in Harrisburg		
12	Student Game Night - Thursday Evening (26th March) 8:30 -10pm								
14		Item	Price/Pers	Number of Ite	Participa	Estimated Cost			
15		Assorted Cookies	\$42.00	12	Dozens	504			
16		Ice Water	\$0.00	4	Gallons	0			
17		Lemonade	\$50.00	4	Gallons	200			
18		TOTAL COST		12	0	\$704.00			
20	Friday Breakfast (March 27th, 7:30am-8:30am)								
22		Item	Price/Pers	Number of Ite	Participa	Estimated Cost			
23		Assorted Muffins	\$48.00	12	Dozens	576			
24		Coffee?	\$83.00	9	Gallons	801			
25		TOTAL COST		12	0	\$1,377.00			
27	Friday Dinner - Plated (March 27th) 7:00pm - 9:00pm								
29		Item	Price/Pers	Number of Ite	Participa	Estimated Cost			
30	Main Dish	Pork Loin	\$40.00		227	\$9,080.00	Note: 32 said not attending		
31	Vegan/Vegetari:	Rigatoni	\$32.00		185	\$5,920.00			
32									
33	Kosher				2				
34									
35		TOTAL COST		0	414	\$15,000.00	avg price \$36.23		
36	Friday - Student Karaoke Night (March 27th) 9pm-11:30pm								
38		Item	Price/Pers	Number of Ite	Participa	Estimated Cost			
39		Assorted Cookies	\$42.00	0	Dozens	0			
40		Ice Water	\$0.00	4	Gallons	0			
41		Lemonade	\$50.00	0	Gallons	0			
42		TOTAL COST		0	0	\$0.00	Note: The cost in Harrisburg		
45	Saturday Breakfast (March 28th) 7:30 -8:15am								
47		Item	Price/Pers	Number of Ite	Participa	Estimated Cost			
48		Mini Traditional Buffet	\$28.00		190	\$5,320.00			
50		TOTAL COST		0	190	\$5,320.00			
52	Saturday Lunch - Plated (March 28th) 11:30-12:45pm								
54		Item	Price/Pers	Number of Ite	Participa	Estimated Cost			
55	Main Dish	Glazed Chicken	\$35.00		350	\$12,250.00	Note: 13 said not attending		
56	Vegan/Vegetari:	Risotto	\$23.00		75	\$1,725.00			
57									
58	Kosher				2				
60									
61		TOTAL COST		0	427	\$13,975.00	avg price \$32.73		
63	Saturday Evening Gala (March 28th) 8:30 -11:59pm								
64	*Must Order Hors D Oeuvres in increments of 50								
65		Item	Price per 50 pt	Number of Or	Participa	Estimated Cost			
66		Classic Italian Bruschetta	30	4		360			
67		Pinot Noir & Goat Cheese Crostini	200	2		400			
68		Pulled Pork Potato Cup	250	2		500			
69		Buffalo Chicken Empanada	250	3		750			
70		Tostones	200	2		400			
71		Mini Crabcakes	300	1		300			
72		Ice Water/Lemonade/Iced Tea	50	8		400			
73		Oven Baked Assorted Cookies and Br	42	5		210			
74						0			
75		TOTAL COST		0	0	\$3,320.00			
76	Sunday Breakfast (March 29th) 8:30-10am								
78		Item	Price/Pers	Number of Ite	Participa	Estimated Cost			
79		Mini Traditional Buffet	\$28.00		190	\$5,320.00			
81		TOTAL COST		0	190	\$5,320.00			
84		TOTAL COST		0	0	\$45,016.00	\$45,000 F&B Minimum 24% Service Charge		

Executive Secretary's Report

Submitted by Kat MacDonald

The NRHC Executive Secretary maintains watch over the NRHC Email Account which is undergoing a migration from northeastregionalhonorscouncil@gmail.com to info@nrhchonors.com. Kat MacDonald, Monroe University, has served in this post during the 20250-26 year.

The Executive Secretary compiles items for all "NRHC News" announcements, maintains the email distribution list, and responds to nearly all emails that are sent to this inbox. During the conference season, the Secretary compiles a "conference email list" to generate "NRHC Conference" announcements and communications.

In addition to maintaining all NRHC communications, the Executive Secretary takes minutes at all board meetings, typically held bi-monthly throughout the calendar year. She also takes minutes at the semi-annual Business Meetings and compiles the Business Meeting materials for the membership.

We ask that all NRHC members, conference registrants, and conference presenters read all emails carefully. Cancellation request numbers are still being calculated..

As a reminder, all requests should be emailed to info@nrhchonors.com and not to individual board members. In order for us to respond correctly, all emails should go to that address.

Further, for this conference year, the Executive Secretary completed the following in preparation of the conference:

- Generated Student Presenter Certificates and Art Show Presenter Certificates, and all other certificates.
- Compiled and organized the judging for all NRHC Awards this year, including SEA Awards, Student of the Year,

Web Coordinator Report

Submitted by Tanya Radford

One important aspect of the Web Coordinator position is to work with our vendor YesEvents on the annual conference's CFP site and conference registration. In 2026, we again opted not to use an electronic conference schedule and we bill institutions for their membership to minimize costs.

The following conference report provides information about proposal submissions (as aggregate and then broken into categories), conference registrants, attendee type and special dietary requests.

NRHC will be accepting nominations for the position of Web Coordinator in 2026, as the 3-year term of the acting coordinator is complete.

Special thanks to Nichole Ballard of YesEvents for support and speedy responses to queries!

Conference report

Conference Proposals

	2026	2025	2024	2023
Proposals completed:	311	284	306	272
Proposals withdrawn:	33	5	6	4
Proposals accepted:	320	281	300	272
	^14%	v6%	^9%	v8%

Registrations

	2026	2025	2024	2023
Conference Registrants:	483	404	405	380
SEA Awards/comp reg:	14	13	20	13
# institutions registered	67	63	58	58

Submissions by Presentation Type

	2026	2025	2024	2023
Academic Panel:	42%	45%	40%	47%
Poster:	40%	36%	34%	33%
Roundtable:	14%	14%	22%	12%

Art Gallery:	1%	<1%	1%	4%
Perf. Arts/Film Showcase:	1%	2%	1%	3%
Idea Exchange:	2%	2%	1%	1%

Submissions by Strand

	2026	2025	2024	2023
The Arts	5%	5%	n/a	n/a
Social Sciences:	25%	19%	21%	24%
Natural Sciences, Mathematics, & Allied Health:	25%	21%	25%	22%
History, Politics & Culture :	11%	20%	10%	17%
Language, Literature & Philosophy:	6%	6%	6%	9%
Business, Economics & Technology:	12%	12%	13%	10%
Education:	6%	13%	9%	7%
Media Studies & Communication Arts:	1%	3%	7%	4%
*Other	9%	7%	9%	7%

* Honors Ed & Practices, Art Gallery, Performing Arts Showcase

Registrant Attendee Type

	2026	2025	2024	2023
First year	8%	6%	10%	9%
Sophomore	19%	20%	18%	16%
Junior	14%	16%	18%	13%
Senior	35%	34%	33%	36%
Faculty	14%	15%	15%	15%
Administrator	8%	6%	6%	7%
Other	2%	3%	>1%	4%

Dietary requests

	2026	2025	2024	2023
No restrictions	83%	83%	82%	81%
Vegetarian	6%	7%	5%	7%
Vegan	2%	1%	2%	1%
Kosher	>1%	>1%	>1%	1%

Gluten Free	2%	2%	2%	2%
Other	7%	7%	9%	8%
Iftar	n/a	n/a	6%	5%

New Haven 2026 Conference Report

Submitted by Andrew Martino

The 2026 annual NRHC conference took place in New Haven, Connecticut from March 26-29, 2026, at the Omni Hotel. This year's theme was "The Haven of Honors: Cultivating Innovative, Upstanding, and Impactful Leaders." The opening event for the first night of the conference was a talk by Holocaust survivor Andy Sarkany. Mr. Sarkany discussed aspects of his life growing up inside the Budapest ghetto where he remained during the Holocaust. Following this faculty were invited to attend a Faculty Social Hour. The students were invited to attend a Game Night event.

The second day of the conference was kicked off by speaker and author Colin Caplan who introduced aspects to the city of New Haven for our CAT® event. In the evening two events took place: the Performing Arts and Film Showcase, and the NRHC Expo and Art Gallery. The Friday night banquet keynote address was given by Dr. Carolyn Macica, Director of Research Operations and Development at Connecticut Children's Research Institute (CCRI), where she also serves as Co-Director for the Scientific Center for Rare Diseases at CCRI.

The third day of the conference consisted mainly of student research presentations in the form of panel presentations, poster presentations, and roundtable discussions. NRHC President, Dr. Jessica McCort delivered her Presidential Address during our luncheon. This was followed by a faculty development seminar. The evening ended with a student gala with the theme "Secret Societies."

The conference concluded on Sunday, March 29th with the NRHC business meeting in the morning, followed by a second round of student poster presentations. The day ended with the NRHC Awards Ceremony. The conference formally closed with incoming President Andrew Martino "Passing the Torch" to incoming President-Elect Zachary Aidala.

Faculty Representatives Report

Submitted by AnnMarie DelliPizzi and Sarah Roe

NRHC Board Responsibilities

The Faculty Representatives reviewed applications for the Scholarship for Equity and Access (SEA) Awards and were able to award 13 scholarships.

We offered an informational session on the new Professional Development program for the conference.

NRHC 2026 Conference

The Faculty Representatives are planning for the Thursday night faculty/staff event on Thursday, March 26. While mostly social and intended for networking, we hope to foster discussions on issues relevant to honors, including, but not limited to, dealing with underprepared students, managing on a small budget and student resiliency.

The Professional Development event on Saturday, March 28, will replace the previous Consultants' Corner. In this new session, honors professionals will have the opportunity to share innovations in their honors programs. The formats for this session include both roundtables and idea exchanges.

Student Representative Report

Submitted by Rhheaa Mehta, Rory Stanfield, and Fatimat Abdallah Banda

Dear Honors Deans, Directors, and Students:

We hope you had an amazing time at the 2026 NRHC Conference in New Haven, Connecticut. As the conference comes to an end, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on our experience as NHRC Student Representatives, planning events and developing so many skills.

The three of us – Rhheaa Mehta, Rory Stanfield, and Fatimat Abdallah Banda – have been working hard since last summer to put together the student events and social media posts. We worked on every event together, separating tasks by our fields of interest and previous experience. We learned how to effectively and efficiently keep everyone updated on each others work and how to plan our meetings and our individual deadlines well.

We wanted our events to engage students and reflect what we experienced attending the events at the 2026 NRHC Conference. We designed a Trivia Night for the first day to ensure that the students have broken the ice and are having fun meeting new people right from the very start. The lively conversation, good-natured heckling, and fun-filled trivia Kahoots created an environment of relaxing joy for the first night. We loved the Karaoke Night that occurred last year, so we decided to recreate it, learning from mistakes that happened last year. We had an awesome karaoke machine and lots of fun singing and joyful laughter. The swag swap went off without a hitch and everyone enjoyed the cool merchandise for different honors colleges. We decided on an Secret Society theme for our Student Gala on the last night. We found a DJ and photobooth set up to ensure that the night was as fun for the attendees as it was for us to put together. We also had a scavenger hunt with keys to the Gala for an added bit of fun and secrecy. We ensured that the Student Art Gallery was advertised and set up well, and that students would learn something and have fun looking at all the art of their peers, with a lovely program. And, of course, we had the Instagram account for NRHC (@nrhchonors) running posts that mixed informative announcements with fun sneak peeks and excitement-building posts.

As Student Representatives, we were also consistently in communication with the NRHC executive board. We attended board meetings, and worked closely with all of the directors, who both supported us throughout the process and helped us make our ideas into reality. We also recruited students to help us set-up events and create the best possible version of our ideas through the Student Activities Committee (SAC).

If you're interested in developing your leadership and organizational skills, and love the NRHC Conference as much as we do, please consider applying for the NRHC Student Representative positions for 2027. It is an experience truly like none other that will challenge you but also help you grow and thrive. You will also be working with a team of amazing, talented experts! Please email us at nrhcstudentreps@gmail.com with any questions you might have; we are always here to answer.

Thank you,

Rhheaa Mehta, Rory Stanfield, and Fatimat Abdallah Banda

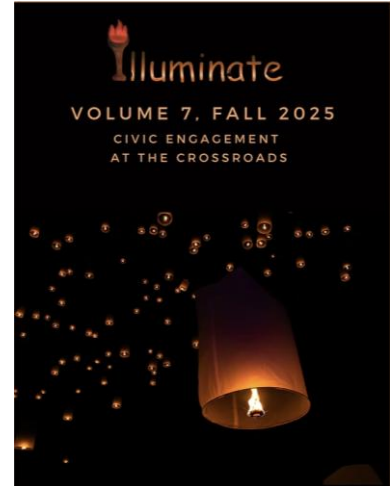
Report on the NRHC Journal *Illuminate*

The 2025 edition of *Illuminate* is online!

www.illuminatenrhc.com

Thank you to the 2025 *Illuminate* Editorial Board:

- Zachary Aidala, Bloomfield College of Montclair State University
- Matt Baran, SUNY Buffalo State University
- Autumn Barszczkowski, Point Park University '19
- Chris Brittain, Ocean County College
- Fait Christian-Ferri, Post University (student)
- Elizabeth Christman, Ramapo College (student)
- AnnMarie DelliPizzi, Dominican University New York
- Helen Fallon, Point Park University
- Patrick Fazioli, Mercy University
- Sandy Feinstein, Penn State Berks
- Rivka Glasser, Stevenson University
- Brook Griffith, Thiel College
- Gwen Kay, SUNY Oswego
- Kathryn M. MacDonald, Monroe University
- Andrew Martino, Salisbury University
- Jessica McCort, Point Park University
- Amy McMillan, SUNY Buffalo State University
- Rhea Mehta, University of Pittsburgh (student)
- Amanda Olachea, Dominican University New York (student)
- Diana Polley, United States Air Force Academy
- Gretchen Purvis, Rutgers University Camden
- Tanya Radford, Dominican University New York
- Sarah Roe, Southern Connecticut State University
- Hillary Sackett-Taylor, Westfield State University
- Michael Tasto, Southern New Hampshire University



Submissions are now open for the 2026 edition. Please read the submission guidelines carefully.

All undergraduate honors students and recent alumni of member institutions are invited to submit their research or creative projects to be considered for publication in the eighth volume

of *Illuminate*. Each submission should be original and not have been published in any other regional or national honors publication.

All submissions are double-blind, peer-reviewed. A student is limited to no more than two submissions for each edition of the journal. Please note that if a student submits two pieces for consideration and both are accepted, the student will be asked to pick only one for publication.

Each submission should include a completed application, [which can be found here](#). While identifying information should be included on the application, **please remove any identifying information from the actual submission, including name, co-authors, e-mail, faculty mentor and institution**. Do not include any identifying information in the file names. All text submissions should be in the form of an editable document, specifically Microsoft Word. PDF files are not acceptable.

Students are encouraged to submit works that are connected to the 2026 NRHC Conference Theme-- The Haven of Honors: Cultivating Innovative, Upstanding, and Impactful Leaders. Students may read more about the theme by clicking [here](#).

GUIDELINES

Academic Work Guidelines

The academic disciplines that are accepted include:

- Business, Economics, and Technology
- Education
- History, Politics, and Culture
- Language, Literature, and Philosophy
- Natural Sciences, Psychology, and Allied Health
- Media Studies and the Arts
- Social Sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Archaeology, Geography, and Jurisprudence)
- Honors Education and Practices

For further description on each of these "strands" as they relate to the 2026 NRHC Conference, please click [here](#).

Academic papers are limited to **a maximum of 5000 words, not including references**. Each paper should include a synopsis or abstract, limited to a maximum of 250 words. References should be formatted in either APA or MLA style, depending on the standard for the discipline. Papers with footnotes can be considered, but please know that contributors will be required to remove and

format footnotes to the *Illuminate* style guidelines. All submissions should be double-spaced with a size 12 Times New Roman font.

Submissions must include a clear statement of purpose and will be evaluated based on content, analysis, organization, grammar, spelling, and formatting.

All digital images should be submitted as .jpg or .png files with a high resolution of at least 300 dpi^[AD1]. Images can be in black and white or color. For images that have been altered in Photoshop or any other program, both the original and altered image should be submitted. Images embedded in documents are not acceptable. Images must be open access if they are to be published by this journal. If authors do not own the rights to the images, they will be asked to provide hyperlinks to the original images so the journal can link to them directly. Further, for authors in the sciences who have papers with multiple formulas, tables, etc., those must be formatted as .jpgs or .pngs for publication by the author.

Please note that, for an NRHC conference, students may create poster files in PowerPoint/other software, or create a slideshow presentation; however, **poster files are not eligible for submission to the journal**. Only research papers, reports, theses, etc. are eligible as academic entries to the journal.

Creative Work Guidelines

The following types of creative projects can be accepted:

- Photography
- Poetry
- Short Fiction
- Creative Nonfiction/Essay
- Fine Art
- Illustrations

Creative works should include a title and an artist's statement, limited to no more than 250 words, that helps to frame and contextualize the art piece. All digital images should be submitted as .jpg files with a high resolution of at least 300 dpi. Images can be in black and white or color. For images that have been altered in Photoshop or any other program, both the original and altered image should be submitted. Images embedded in documents are not acceptable.

Any style of poetry can be submitted.

Short fiction is limited to a **maximum of 5000 words**, double-spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font.

Essays are limited to a **maximum of 1500 words**, double-spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font.

SEND US YOUR SUBMISSIONS

[Please click here to submit your work for consideration to *Illuminate's* 2026 edition.](#)

The deadline for submissions to the 2026 edition is Sunday, May 17, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. EST.

Illuminate Publication Data

Edition/Year	Total Number of Pieces Published
Volume 7 (2025)	27
Volume 6 (2024)	29
Volume 5 (2023)	23
Volume 4 (2022)	32
Volume 3 (2021)	25
Volume 2 (2020)	30
Volume 1 (2019)	18
	<u>184 TOTAL PUBLISHED PIECES</u>

Volume 7 (2025)

Paper of the Year/Creative of the Year Submissions: 12

- 5 accepted with minor revisions
- 2 accepted pending minor revisions and second review (both revised and were subsequently accepted)
- 5 either didn't respond or opted out of the process

Published: 7

Proposals Received during Regular Cycle: 43

- 12 accepted with minor revisions
 - o 12 were published
- 15 accepted pending major revisions and second review)
 - o 1 author had two conditionally-accepted papers and chose one to resubmit (which was accepted)
 - o 6 authors opted out
 - o 8 were published

Published: 20

Total Published: 27

- **Academic: 14**
- **Creative: 13**

58.3% of Paper of the Year/Creative of the Year Submissions Published

46.5% of Proposals During Regular Submission Process Published

49.1% Published Total

Volume 6 (2024)

Proposals Received: 41

- 19 Accepted with minor revisions
 - o 1 student did not submit a revision

- 20 Conditionally Accepted pending major revisions and second review
 - o 1 student did not respond at all to the opportunity to revise and resubmit
 - o The authors of 4 papers opted out of continuing process to revise
 - o One author had two conditionally accepted papers and opted out of revising both (though only one would have been published if revised and accepted)
 - o 12 students sent revisions of their papers
 - 1 student was rejected on second review due to lack of revision
 - 11 students were Accepted
 - All 11 students resubmitted final drafts and moved to publication

- 1 Rejected

Total Published: 29

- Academic: 20
- Creative: 9

70.7% of Proposals Published

Note – at least six more papers were eligible for publication; however, students opted out or did not follow through on completing the editorial process. We intentionally accepted all papers that could be published/published following major revision.

Volume 5 (2023)

Proposals Received: 34

- 18 Accepted with minor revisions
 - o 1 student paper did not move forward since student had two papers

- 13 Conditionally Accepted pending major revisions and second review
 - o The authors of 3 papers opted out of continuing the process to revise
 - o 10 students sent revisions of their papers
 - 1 student was rejected on the second review due to lack of revision
 - 9 students were Accepted
 - 6 students resubmitted final drafts and moved to publication
 - 3 students did not follow through on the final draft stage

- 3 Rejected

Total Published: 23

- Academic: 18
- Creative: 5

67.6% of Proposals Published

Note – at least six more papers were eligible for publication; however, students opted out or did not follow through on completing the editorial process.

Volume 4 (2022)

Proposals Received: 50

- 25 Accepted with minor revisions
 - o 3 students did not complete the editorial process
 - o 3 pieces were ineligible for publication since student had two acceptances (only publish one per student unless student submits both academic and creative proposals)

- 16 Conditionally Accepted pending major revisions and second review
 - o The authors of 2 papers either opted out of process or did not respond
 - o 14 students sent revisions of their papers
 - 14 students were Accepted
 - 14 students resubmitted final drafts and moved to publication

- 9 Rejected

Total Published: 32

- Academic: 24
- Creative: 8

64% of Proposals Published

Note – at least five more papers were eligible for publication; however, students opted out or did not follow through on completing the editorial process.

Volume 3 (2021)

Proposals Received: 36

- 18 Accepted with minor revisions
 - o 3 students did not complete the editorial process
 - o 3 pieces were ineligible for publication since student had two acceptances (only publish one per student unless student submits both academic and creative proposals)

- 13 Conditionally Accepted pending major revisions and second review
 - o 1 student did not complete the process (but had an accepted paper as well)
 - o 6 other students opted out of the process or did not respond to follow-up emails
 - o 7 students sent revisions of their papers
 - 7 students were Accepted
 - 7 students resubmitted final drafts and moved to publication

- 5 Rejected

Total Published: 25

- Academic: 19
- Creative: 6

69.4% of Proposals Published

Note – at least nine more papers were eligible for publication; however, students opted out or did not follow through on completing the editorial process.

Volume 2 (2020)

Proposals Received: 46

- 24 Accepted with minor revisions
 - o 5 students did not complete the editorial process

- 6 Conditionally Accepted pending major revisions and second review
 - o 1 student did not complete the process
 - o 5 students sent revisions of their papers
 - 5 students were Accepted
 - 5 students resubmitted final drafts and moved to publication

- 16 Rejected (*Note – in 2020, some students were published as part of a “2020 Conference Page” since the conference was cancelled due to COVID-19; some students were rejected since their work was already published*)

Total Published: 30

- Academic: 24
- Creative: 6

65.2% of Proposals Published

Note – at least six more papers were eligible for publication; however, students opted out or did not follow through on completing the editorial process.

Volume 1 (2019)

Proposals Received: 28

- 23 Accepted with minor revisions
 - o 2 students did not complete the editorial process
 - o 3 pieces were not published because students had two acceptances (they were asked to pick one for publication)
- 5 Rejected
- Note: There were not conditional acceptances in 2019

Total Published: 18

- Academic: 15
- Creative: 3

64.2% of Proposals Published

Note – at least two more papers were eligible for publication; however, students opted out or did not follow through on completing the editorial process.

Call For Illuminate Editors:

Dear Colleagues,

The Northeast Regional Honors Council is forming the Editorial Board for the 2026 volume of *Illuminate*, NRHC's undergraduate research and creative journal. We invite **honors directors and deans** to share this call with **faculty across your campus (honors or non-honors)** and to **nominate advanced honors students with strong writing and editorial skills** to serve as student editors.

Illuminate showcases outstanding undergraduate research and creative work from across the NRHC and provides students with an authentic scholarly publishing experience. To offer a sense of the journal, the 2025 volume (published online November 1) is available here:

<https://www.illuminatenrhc.com/2025-edition>

Editorial Board Responsibilities & Timeline

This is a year-long appointment, with the primary workload occurring between June and September.

Responsibilities include:

- First-round double-blind peer review of submissions
 - o Submissions due: May 17, 2026
 - o Reviews due: late June 2026
- Second-round review of revised submissions
 - o Students will have approximately 4–6 weeks to revise
- Light copyediting and final review in preparation for publication
 - o Publication planned for October 2026

Editorial Board members will also be invited to participate in conversations about future *Illuminate* initiatives, including year-long student engagement opportunities and recognitions such as the Creative Paper and Academic Paper of the Year awards.

Who Should Be Nominated or Encouraged to Apply

- Faculty from any discipline (honors affiliation not required)
- **Advanced honors students with strong writing, editing, and professional judgment**
- All work is remote

- Particularly well-suited for those seeking:
 - o Editorial experience
 - o External service or professional development
 - o Meaningful engagement with undergraduate scholarship

The workload is manageable but does require consistent engagement, particularly during the summer.

Next Steps

Please encourage interested faculty and nominated honors students to express interest by **March 15, 2026**, so that we may assemble the Editorial Board and begin planning conversations in late February. Expressions of interest and inquiries should be sent to illuminatenrhc@gmail.com.

Thank you for your support.

Warm regards,

Diana Polley

Editor, *Illuminate*

Northeast Regional Honors Council

Illuminate (NRHC) 2026 Editorial Board – Expression of Interest

The Northeast Regional Honors Council invites expressions of interest for the 2026 volume of *Illuminate*, NRHC's undergraduate research and creative journal.

This is a year-long appointment, with primary responsibilities from June to September 2026.

Editorial Board members participate in:

- First-round double-blind peer review (June 2026)
- Second-round review of revised submissions (late summer 2026)
- Light copyediting and final review prior to publication (October 2026)

All work is remote.

Please submit this form by **March 15, 2026**.

We are grateful for your willingness to support undergraduate scholarship across the region.

SECTION 1: Basic Information

Full Name

Email Address

Institution

Department / Discipline

Current Role

[Multiple choice]

- Faculty
- Honors Director/Dean
- Graduate Student
- Undergraduate Honors Student
- Other (please specify)

SECTION 2: Areas of Review

Please indicate your PRIMARY area of expertise (the area in which you are most comfortable serving as a reviewer).

[Multiple choice]

Academic Categories:

- Business, Economics, and Technology
- Education
- Language, Literature, and Philosophy
- Media and the Arts
- Natural Sciences, Psychology, and Allied Health
- Social Sciences

Creative Categories:

- Creative Nonfiction
- Fine Art and Illustration
- Poetry
- Short Fiction

Please indicate any SECONDARY areas in which you would also be willing or comfortable reviewing.

Academic Categories:

- Business, Economics, and Technology
- Education
- Language, Literature, and Philosophy
- Media and the Arts
- Natural Sciences, Psychology, and Allied Health
- Social Sciences

Creative Categories:

- Creative Nonfiction
- Fine Art and Illustration
- Poetry
- Short Fiction

SECTION 3: Commitment

I understand that this is a year-long appointment with primary responsibilities occurring between June and September 2026, and I am willing to serve in this capacity.

[Checkbox]

- Yes

SECTION 4: Student Applicants Only

Major(s)

Expected Graduation Date

Brief Statement of Interest (150–300 words):

Please describe your interest in serving as a student editor for *Illuminate* and any relevant experience (research, writing, editing, or leadership).

Brief Faculty Reference (Name and Email)

Upload Resume (PDF preferred)

Confirmation Message

Thank you for your interest in serving on the 2026 *Illuminate* Editorial Board.

We deeply appreciate your willingness to support undergraduate research and creative scholarship across the Northeast Regional Honors Council.

We will respond shortly after the NRHC Conference in April 2026!

— Diana Polley
Editor, *Illuminate*
NRHC

Spring 2026 NRHC Board Elections

Join the NRHC Executive Board!

Please do consider running for a position, and/or encourage your students to run. This work is extremely meaningful insofar as it directly benefits honors students in the region by providing them with professional, academic and experiential opportunities. Further, for those of you needing external service for tenure and promotion purposes, please consider that Executive Board service is a gratifying and meaningful way to boost your CV.

If you are (or if your student is) interested in running for one of the following Executive Board positions, please send me the required candidacy information, which includes a candidate's statement and a headshot by Close of Business on Tuesday, May 27.

Student candidates must secure a letter from their directors affirming program/institutional commitment to support travel expenses to attend the three meetings of the executive board (July site planning meeting, fall business meeting during the NCHC conference, and the Albany conference). This letter must be included with the candidate's statement and headshot. Please note that NRHC will provide up to \$1000 in travel reimbursements to each student representative.

Elected candidates are strongly encouraged to attend the summer planning meeting (date TBD), Elected candidates are also expected to attend the upcoming NCHC conference and attendance at the NRHC conference is required. Each executive member receives a stipend.

Note: If you wish to nominate someone else, please secure that person's agreement to run before submitting his/her name to me at this email address.

The following positions are up this election period:

Vice President (1 open position): Elected for a one-year term and shall be a member of the faculty or administration of any member institution in the Region. The Vice President shall succeed automatically to the office of President-Elect upon the election and installation of the new Vice President. The Vice President shall succeed to the office of President-Elect should that office become vacant. The president-elect co-chairs the organizing of the annual regional conference; the service of vice-president, president-elect, and president, is a three-year commitment to the region.

Faculty Board Representative (1 open position): Elected to a two-year term by a vote of the membership of the Region. Faculty Board Representatives may serve no more than one consecutive term.

Student Board Representatives (3 open positions): Elected to a one-year term by a vote of the membership of the Region. Student Board Representatives may be elected to additional one-year term. The two student representatives plan three key student socials (Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings) of the conference, advertise to students, advise students on what to expect, maintain the region's Facebook page with text and photos, and may coordinate with local student volunteers to help with City-as-Text, the registration table, and other tasks as needed.

Executive Secretary (1 open position): Elected to a 3-year term, the Secretary is expected to take minutes, maintain the NRHC document repository, and regularly monitor the NRHC Gmail account – sending membership wide emails and responding to queries.

Web Coordinator (1 open position): Elected to a 3-year term, the Web Coordinator is expected to have a facility learning new technologies and a working knowledge of web design and logistics. The Web Coordinator is responsible for the creation and maintenance of the Council's website, the Call for Proposals, and the Conference Registration process.

You can find the NRHC Constitution and By-Laws here: <https://www.nrhchonors.com/constitution>

Future Conference Sites & Sponsorship Report

The Site Selection Committee is pleased to report that our confirmed location for the 2027 Annual Conference will be Baltimore, Maryland hosted at the Hyatt Regency Baltimore Inner Harbor.

The conference dates are **April 1-4, 2027**.

- **Room Rate:** \$205 per night
- **Parking:** \$39 per night
- **Early Bird Registration:** \$375

NRHC is excited to return to Baltimore for the first time since 2019. Conveniently located for many of our members in the southern part of the region, the city provides easy access by car, train, or plane.

The Inner Harbor area is a vibrant and highly walkable destination filled with museums, historic sites, and waterfront attractions. Just steps from the Hyatt, visitors can explore the National Aquarium, the Maryland Science Center, and the historic ships docked in the harbor. The area also offers numerous restaurants, public spaces, and cultural attractions that make it an engaging destination for honors students.

Sponsorship Report:

School	Sponsorship Level	Amount
Southern Connecticut State University	Platinum	\$2,000
NCHC	Gold	\$1,500
Bard College	Bronze	\$450
Monroe University	Bronze	\$450
	Total:	\$4,400

NRHC Member Involvement

[Please click here to volunteer for a committee. NRHC is committed to reigniting our committee work this academic year, and we need your help!](#)

The Membership Committee

The Membership Committee shall assist the Executive Secretary and Executive Treasurer in identifying and recruiting members and in designing activities to promote active membership in the Region. The Chair and the members of the Membership Committee shall be appointed by the President with the concurrence of the Executive Board.

The Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall be chaired by the President. The Executive Secretary and Executive Treasurer shall be ex-officio members of the Committee. The President, with the concurrence of the Executive Board, shall appoint other members of the Committee. These people shall be members of the Region and shall be appointed for a one-year term. The Nominating Committee shall present a roster of candidates at a Business Meeting with at least one candidate for each office. The Nominating Committee shall invite nominations of other candidates who must be present at the meeting or who have given their written consent for their nomination. Written consent must be presented to the Chair of the Nominating Committee at or prior to the Business Meeting at which the nomination is made. Nominated individuals will stand for election using voting procedures outlined in Article VI.

The Site Selection Committee

The Site Selection Committee. The Chair of the Site Selection Committee and up to three Committee members shall be appointed by the President with the concurrence of the Executive Board. The Site Selection Committee shall identify sites for future Conferences, identify potential site hosts, and shall work with the Executive Committee. The President-Elect is an ex officio member of the Site Selection Committee.

The Conference Planning Committee

Conference Planning Committee. The Co-Chairs of the Conference Planning Committee are the President-Elect and the President. The Executive Board and the chair of the Ad Hoc Local Arrangements Committee are members of the Conference Planning Committee. The Conference Planning Committee shall organize the Annual Conference and make recommendations for assessments of charges, expenditures of funds, and other budgetary matters associated with the Conference. The President-Elect and President may, with the concurrence of the Conference Planning Committee, appoint ad hoc subcommittees and their chairs to address particular issues or topics of concern. Conference budgets shall be submitted to the Board in a timely manner.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall be co-chaired by the President and the Vice President. This committee will develop a plan of action to increase diversity in NRHC, contribute to NRHC materials dealing with issues of diversity, and work to fulfill the intention of this statement. Any honors administrator, faculty member, staff member or student of an NRHC member institution can volunteer.

Illuminate Editorial Board

The Illuminate Editorial Board works throughout the year to review student academic and creative submissions and to provide valuable feedback. If you would like to serve as a member of the Editorial Board, please contact Kat MacDonald at illuminatenrhc@gmail.com Kathryn MacDonald, Editor in Chief (kmacdonald@monroecollege.edu)

Peer Mentorship Program

We are pleased to announce the launch of the NRHC Peer Mentorship Program (PMP), an initiative designed with you in mind. The goals of the PMP are to strengthen the bonds of community between honors professionals at our member institutions and to provide an organizational mechanism for sharing ideas and experience that could enhance both professional development and student success.

Queries can also be directed here to northeastregionalhonorscouncil@gmail.com, and your inquiry will be passed along.